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MUSLIMS OF SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA: TRENDS AND PROSPECTS

Richard Pipes

Part I

177 THE CRUCIAL QUESTION in the entire future of Soviet Central Asia is the degree to which the native population of that region is succumbing to the process of Russification, actively fostered by the Soviet regime.[1] If the Central Asian natives are gradually losing their ethnic peculiarities and assimilating, either by being absorbed into the Great Russian population or by dissolving in a new, "Soviet" nationality, then Soviet Central Asia may be expected in time fully to merge with the Russian core of the USSR. If, on the other hand, they are resisting alien pressures and retaining their ethnic and cultural complexion, then Central Asia will continue to be set apart from the remainder of Soviet territories, and to merit distinct political treatment. In either event, the fate of Central Asia as a Russian frontier and a potential buffer zone between Russia and China may be said to hinge primarily on the cultural tendencies of its Muslim population.

124 In view of the great shortage of reliable, objective printed materials dealing with the inhabitants of contemporary Soviet Central Asia, an inquiry of this nature must of necessity have recourse to some unorthodox sources of information, among them the testimony of refugees from this area. It must also be confined to the broadest aspects of the question. Neither limitation is quite satisfactory from the point of view of scholarship, but since scholarship is a means for the discovery of truth and not an end in itself, it must be capable of adapting itself to the circumstances.

101 [1] By Soviet Central Asia are meant here both the steppe regions and Turkestan, i.e., the territory covered today by the republics of Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Prior to the Revolution they embraced the General Gubernie of the Steppe and of Turkestan, the Gubernie of Uralsk and Turgai, and the dependent principalities of Khiva and Bukhara. By the term "Russians" is meant not only the Great Russians, but also the Ukrainians and Belorussians, because statistical and other information for Central Asia rarely distinguishes among these Slavic subgroups.

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114 ◆ RICHARD PIPES is Research Associate of the Harvard Russian Research Center and Tutor in History and Literature, Harvard University. He is the author of *The Formation of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), a history of the nationalist movements in the Russian borderlands during and immediately after the Russian Revolution.

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127 The primary sources of information for this essay consisted of the
124 standard literature on Central Asia, pre-Revolutionary and Soviet, and of materials collected in the course of interviews conducted with 31 Muslim refugees from the Soviet Union, most of them from Central Asia.[2] These interviews concentrated on the personal experiences of the informants, and avoided, insofar as possible, references to politics, in order to reduce to a minimum the likelihood of deliberate concealment or lying. All the informants were male, and consisted, in their majority, of persons 30 to 50 years of age, with a high school or *tekhnikum* education, who had left the Soviet Union as laborers or prisoners of war in the course of the Nazi-Soviet conflict. They represented, in other words, largely the middle-aged Soviet "intelligentsia" (in the Communist sense of the word). The conclusions derived from the interviews were placed against the historical background of Central Asia for the purpose of separating the accidental from the essential, on the assumption that generalizations obtained from interviews were both more reliable and more significant in terms of the future when in agreement with pre-Soviet developments in Central Asia. The fact that in the main there is such agreement seems to the author an added reason for confidence in the correctness of the conclusions thus derived.

121 The main criteria used in investigating the cultural tendencies of Central Asian Muslim were five: religion, customs, language, ethnic identity, and the character and trends of the native intelligentsia. An attempt was made in each case to determine the extent and nature of the changes which had occurred under Soviet rule; to ascertain whether these changes agreed with or ran contrary to the spontaneous developments taking place prior to the 1917 Revolution; and finally, to evaluate their meaning in terms of the probable future.

RELIGION

000 The term "religion" comprises at least three distinct phenomena: a belief in the existence of one or more supreme beings; a set of rituals which gives this belief external expression; and a way of life based upon the principles explicitly and implicitly enunciated by the belief's founders. In analyzing the religious life of a community, these aspects must be clearly differentiated.

101 Russian Central Asia consists of two main parts, distinguished from each other by historic tradition, culture, and topography: the northern half, the steppe region (today's Kazakhstan), and the southern half, Turkestan (comprising the remaining four Central Asian republics). The

122 [2] These interviews were conducted in the summer of 1953 under the auspices and with the generous assistance of the Institute of Intercultural Studies and the Ford Foundation. I wish to express my particular gratitude to Professor Philip E. Mosely of Columbia University, who first suggested this task and was instrumental in enabling me to carry it out. I also would like to thank the Center for International Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for its kind help in completing this inquiry.

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The population of the former[1] was traditionally nomadic, Turkish, and in religious matters fairly indifferent. Turkestan, on the other hand, being predominantly urban and agricultural, and inhabited by Iranians and considerably Arabicized and Iranicized Turks, was until the Soviet period one of the great centers of Islamic learning and practice. This difference between the religious background of the two regions must be kept in mind when studying contemporary Central Asian Muslims.

The most striking feature of the religious attitude of the Muslim refugees is their strong and articulate hostility toward all forms of established religion, including Islam. Time and again, the informants expressed the conviction that all religion is a form of superstition incapable of standing the test of "science," of serving society as a means of attaining social progress. The typical opinion ran as follows: "Yes, I believe in a Supreme Being, but it doesn't matter whether He is called Allah, God, Christ, or anything else. Nor does He care whether I pray or not. Religion is a superstition which keeps people backward. Look at the Arabs and Persians, where religion has gotten them: they are poor and ignorant. To achieve progress, we must not allow religion to interfere, though religion should not be persecuted because it does help some people in facing life." The general assumptions behind such reasoning are fairly obvious: the belief in a conflict between faith and reason, religion and science; a pragmatic, utilitarian scale of values; scepticism of certain aspects of religion, leading to a wholesale rejection of all religion.

In the long run, this attitude may well determine the whole future of Islam in Central Asia. The intelligentsia displays the same cult of reason, and of its concomitant, secular society, in an extreme, uncomprising way, as do the educated groups of other Asian societies. Here, as there, progress, the ultimate good, is conceived as incompatible with religion. Against such hostility to established religion the revival of Islam in its pre-1917 form, even under conditions of complete freedom, does not seem likely.

This conclusion is strengthened by the picture given of the religious practices of Central Asian Muslims. Islam in the Soviet Union has to operate under extremely difficult conditions, due in part to the specific repressive measures undertaken by the regime against religion, and in part to the general conditions of Soviet life. In the first category are the physical destruction of the Islamic leadership undertaken between 1927 and 1932 through the arrest and deportation of virtually all persons enjoying some religious status in the Muslim community, from the top hierarchy to the lowest village mullah; the closing of nearly all the village mosques and most of the city mosques; the threat of dismissal hanging constantly over every Soviet citizen in any position of responsibility if known to engage in religious practices; and the nearly complete suppression of all religious literature through the change of the native alphabets (from Arabic to

[1] [the northern half of Soviet Central Asia or Kazakhstan -- Analyst]

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798 Latin in the late 1920's, and again from Latin to Cyrillic ten years later),
212 the impounding of religious texts, including the Qur'an, and the total cessation of all publication of a religious nature. These antireligious policies would of themselves make an active religious life most difficult.

795 The interviews, however, indicate that equally important in hampering
735 the religious life of Central Asian Islam are forces not directly connected
177 with the Communist antireligious policies, such as the general impoverishment of the population, which compels the inhabitants to devote all their time and energies to attain bare survival, and leaves little freedom for time-consuming actions required by religion; the shortage of animals used in certain Muslim festivals; and the requirements of a highly dynamic society, geared primarily for production and not for the satisfaction of
[793] the needs of its citizens. If, despite such formidable difficulties, Islamic practices have not altogether vanished from Central Asia, the reason must be sought both in the great hold which this religion exercises on its followers (Bartold had once observed that history knows many cases of mass conversion *to* Islam, but not a single instance of a society being converted *from* Islam), and the secondary role of leaders and institutions in that religion; the latter factor permits Muslims, like the Jews, to survive better under extreme oppression than other religions for which the clergy, the hierarchy, the supreme spiritual authority are essential.

788 One of the most important — perhaps the single most important — ele-
177 ment in the Muslim ritual are the five daily prayers. This practice seems to have declined among Soviet Muslims to such an extent as to have all
[687] but vanished. The principal cause for its disappearance is the inability of Soviet Muslims to take time off from work in order to recite the prayers; such stoppage of work is considered "economic sabotage" and involves serious retribution. The fact that since the 1930's Friday — the day of rest and public prayer — is considered a regular working day in Central Asia prevents the adult population from engaging in communal worship as well. The only times of the day when a Muslim may perform his prayers undisturbed occur at sunrise and at sunset — the first and the last of the daily prayers; that is, when he is at home, with his family. This is the reason why, to the extent that the daily prayer is observed at all, it survives largely among that part of the population which is not gainfully employed: above all, the women and the elders.

788 The younger generation is further handicapped by its ignorance of the
869 prayers. Only a few of the refugees interviewed knew how to perform the
177 regular daily prayers; none of those belonged to the younger generation. It may also be added that not one of these refugees had cared to learn the prayers since his arrival in the West.

785 Another important duty of Muslims is to observe daytime fasting during the entire 28 days of the month of Ramazan. Prior to 1917 the fast was

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faithfully observed by the Turkestan natives; those of the steppe region were less strict, prevented as they were by the exigencies of nomadic and seminomadic life. During Ramazan, Muslim communities in Central Asia customarily reversed their routine, resting daytimes, eating and entertaining at night. Shortly after the end of the fast there occurs a major holiday, *kurban bayram* (feast of sacrifice), attended by the slaughter of sheep and by festivities.

The difficulties of observing the Ramazan fast in the Soviet Union are obvious at first sight. To eliminate or even reduce daytime work for a period of a month is possible only for a people economically independent; it is inconceivable in a society in which virtually every breadwinner is an employee of the state, and the state drives relentlessly to increase production. Furthermore, a worker who fasts all day is, even when compelled to do a full day's work, a poor worker. As a result, the Ramazan fast is severely repressed by the authorities and can survive only in a greatly modified form.

Several of the refugees recalled instances of Communist Party officials subjecting Muslims suspected of fasting to "tests." Thus, for example, many Muslim employees of state institutions were called in for conferences with their superiors sometime during the month of Ramazan and there offered a drink or a cigarette; refusal to accept the offer was tantamount to an admission of fasting and could lead to expulsion from work. Similar "tests" were recalled by schoolteachers — during Ramazan teams of officials from neighboring towns often visited schools and checked on both the teachers and the students.

Nevertheless, the observance of the fast, although severely restricted, appears to have partly survived. Some Muslims, unable to fast for 28 consecutive days, compromise by abstaining for three days only: the 1st, 15th, and last days of Ramazan. Others, compelled to eat in order to have strength for work and to avoid the suspicion of authorities, eat and drink as little as possible. It is quite likely — although there is no direct evidence — that the fast may be observed more regularly among those who are not gainfully employed.

The *kurban bayram*, despite its originally religious significance, appears to have suffered the fate of most religious festivities in societies which are secularized or on their way to becoming so: the religious element has largely been forgotten, and the holiday has acquired a predominantly secular, national character. This, in part, may be one of the reasons for its survival. Almost all the informants agreed that the *kurban bayram* was widely observed at least until the outbreak of the war, even by members of the Communist Party. The main difficulty in observing this holiday is the shortage of sheep, which are essential for the ceremony. Not only are almost all the sheep in the hands of the *kolkhozy* (collective farms) and

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782 796 177 233 *sovkhozy* (state farms) — four-fifths, according to the Soviet Encyclopedia — which do not release them for religious purposes, but the over-all number of sheep and goats in Turkestan has declined from 3 per native in 1913 to approximately 1.5 per native in 1938. Compromises and subterfuges are resorted to to overcome this difficulty. In some collective farms the sheep are stolen or slaughtered under one pretext or another, often with the tacit acquiescence of the collective's chairman. In the cities, the well-to-do purchase sheep on the free market, while the less affluent either enter into partnerships with other families to purchase and divide one ram, or else, if they are even too poor for that, sacrifice a chicken instead. The *kurban bayram* seems to be observed less publicly than in pre-Revolutionary years, and usually only in the circle of the immediate family, "with the windows shut and the doors locked," as several refugees put it.

735 177 The third fundamental Muslim duty is that of regular alms giving, known as *zakat*, traditionally set at 2.5 percent of earnings. In Central Asia the *zakat* had lost even before the Russian conquest in the 19th century the character of a purely philanthropic measure, having been transformed into a *de facto* tax, collected for the benefit of the local secular authorities. The tsarist administration did its best to suppress this practice in territories under its control, replacing it with its own system of taxes. Today, nothing seems to remain of the *zakat* in Soviet Central Asia. The practice had no deep roots to begin with; the population is too impoverished to keep it up; and there is no one to collect it. Almost none of the refugees even knew the meaning of the term *zakat*, and upon being informed, denied ever seeing it practiced.

788 177 Finally, there is the obligation of performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, the *hajj*. Of all the duties incumbent upon a Muslim this is the one most difficult to fulfill under Soviet conditions, inasmuch as the regime forbids travel of private citizens abroad for any purpose whatsoever. Occasionally, as in 1953, the Soviet government itself dispatches to Mecca official delegations headed by government-appointed muftis and shaykhs, but it is quite obvious that such delegations consist only of carefully screened individuals, liberally interspersed with employees of the security police, and that their primary purpose is not religion but foreign propaganda. For the private individual, the road to Mecca is barred. It appears, however, that pilgrimages to the graves of local saints continue to be popular, and in some sense may serve as a substitute for the forbidden *hajj*.

Thus, of the four practices which constitute the central elements of the Islamic ritual, the five Pillars of the Faith (the fifth being the profession of faith), one (prayer) is almost entirely neglected by the younger and middle-age groups, one (fasting) is observed rarely and even then imperfectly, and two (*zakat* and *hajj*) have completely disappeared. Religious *ritual* thus may be said to have declined considerably and no longer

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to play an important role in the life of the Central Asian Muslims of the Soviet Union.

Let us now turn to other Islamic customs and practices. Circumcision appears from the interviews to be almost universally observed by Central Asian Muslims. One of the reasons for its prevalence is its tolerance by the regime, caused by the fact that this practice requires neither abstention from work nor the transfer of personal allegiance from the state to the religion, and in fact may be justified by hygenic reasons. It is performed by mendicant "specialists," who visit villages and towns, or by anyone else skilled in the use of appropriate instruments, such as local barbers. Communist Party members and other persons in positions of responsibility who may be incriminated in the eyes of the regime by observing this practice, send their children to relatives away from home, where they can be circumcised without the knowledge of the local authorities. Circumcision seems to have lost its festive character, and is carried out so as to attract the minimum attention. Its prevalence among all layers of Muslim society, including Communist Party members, has been attested to by every one of the refugees interviewed.

The religious ceremonies attending births, weddings, and burials require the presence of religiously trained figures such as the mullahs, and it is the great shortage of such persons which more than any factor deprives them of their religious character. The vast majority of mullahs and other Muslim leaders disappeared during the terror of 1928–32. Careful questioning of refugees revealed that in some villages and towns mullahs did remain all throughout the 1930's. These "hidden mullahs" earned their livelihood as ordinary workers (e.g., kolkhoz laborers, night watchmen, etc.) and often as janitors in mosques and other religious buildings, but when the occasion arose could also conduct religious ceremonies if the latter were organized by trusted friends and within a closed family circle. Almost every one of the refugees interviewed remembered either knowing of such a clandestine mullah or of having heard of one. But they are few and live under the perpetual threat of exposure and arrest; hence, they cannot make a great impression on the religious life of their communities. Where there is need for persons with religious training, the natives are far more likely to use the services of an elderly layman from their own midst than risk engaging a person who is difficult to locate and may involve them in trouble with the authorities.

As a consequence of the disappearance of the religious leaders, births, weddings, and burials appear to have largely lost their religious complexion and become transformed into occasions for mere family gatherings. The entire institution of betrothal — which will be described at greater length below — conforms closely to secular local traditions, but is no longer accompanied by religious ceremonies. Occasionally, refugees indicate, after

585 Occasionally, refugees indicate, after
177 a formal lay wedding ceremony, the parents of the bride and bridegroom may engage the services of a mullah or another trained person to read in secret the *nikah*, the wedding formula, but this is an exception rather than the rule.

798 As for the *shari'ah* — representing for the Muslims the religious "way
517 of life" — it has been eliminated not only by the Soviet liquidation of
177 native religious courts and the introduction of a single system of justice
518 throughout the Soviet Union, but also by the spontaneous development of Muslim society itself. Even prior to the 1917 Revolution there had emerged among the Central Asian intelligentsia a powerful secular reform movement known as *jadidism* (*dzhadidism*, in Russian transliteration), the followers of which adopted as one of their principal aims the separation of religion and state. The jadidists fought the clerical groups, gathered around the Ulema Dzhemieti (Association of Ulema), with as much fervor as they fought Russian colonial officials and settlers. Indeed, on this basis of a united effort against the religious influence on everyday life, there occurred in the early period of the Soviet regime an alliance between the Communists and left-wing jadidists which lasted until the purges of the 1930's. The desire to transform Central Asia into a modern, secular, Western country — a desire which is as deep-seated in the post-World War II refugee as it was in the pre-1917 jadidist — has as one of its prerequisites the elimination of religion from a position of influence in the everyday life of the Muslim community, and its confinement to the "proper" sphere, that is, ritual. Islam as a way of life has thus been destroyed by the combined pressures of Soviet antireligious policy and the hostility of the native intelligentsia. The trend in the direction of secularization is so distinct as to make a return to the *shari'ah* as unlikely as a return of Western Europe to the medieval theocratic ideal.[3]

771 Without doubt the religious life of the Islamic community in Central
565 Asia is stronger among the lower strata of society, among the mountain
517 peoples, and among the elders and women than it is among the groups represented in the interviews. But it is equally certain that the most active elements of society — the adult males, and especially the rural and urban "intelligentsia" — reject religion. A certain measure of religious revival in the event of the return of civic freedom in Central Asia is not unlikely. It may lead to a reopening of the mosques, the reinstitution of Friday prayers, the emergence of mullahs and the introduction of some religious education for the young. But a return to the religious life of the pre-
795 1927–32 period seems entirely out of the question. Islam still survives as
177 a powerful social bond because it serves to differentiate the native from

[3] In this connection it is interesting to note that recently a Constitutional Commission of Pakistan declared that a republic based on the principles of the Qur'an, as desired by the Pakistani ulema, could not be a democratic one, because of the fundamental incompatibility between Islam and democracy. See *New York Times*, April 24, 1954.

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the Russian; but instead of constituting the substance of ethnic identification, as it did before the Revolution, today it forms merely one of its many attributes.

CUSTOMS

Although most national customs of the Central Asian Turks are in one way or another connected with Islam, they are by origin and function sufficiently distinct from it to be treated independently, the more so that they are affected differently by Soviet policies: whereas Communism is openly hostile to religion, it either tolerates customs or attempts to take them over for its own purposes.

National customs have fared much better under Soviet rule than religious practices, in part as a result of this tolerant attitude of the regime and in part because they can be better reconciled with the spirit of Westernization. While Islam has suffered a serious decline, national customs have either remained intact or undergone a transformation which has modified somewhat their outward manifestations without diminishing their hold on the population. In regard to customs, the following seems to be the general rule: the natives abandon or modify those customs which are utterly incompatible with the improvement of living standards, but they cling tenaciously to the traditions which either do not interfere with material progress or can be modified to serve it. Where abandonment or adjustment is necessary, the natives often prefer to adopt the customs of their more advanced Muslim neighbors than those of the Russians or other Europeans.

This pattern emerges clearly in the institution of marriage, which can be analyzed in its three main aspects: the method whereby the marriage is arranged; the formalities connected with the engagement; and the wedding ceremony.

Traditionally, in Muslim communities of Central Asia marriages were arranged not by the couples concerned, but by their parents. Engagements were frequently made when the prospective bride and bridegroom were still in their childhood, and occasionally even before they were born. This custom was in keeping with the elevated position of the father in the Muslim family, and with the seclusion of women in the urban and rural communities of Turkestan; among the nomadic Turks, the high bride price (*kalym*) was a further factor inhibiting marriage outside parental authority.

Inasmuch as this practice runs contrary to the breaking up of family control and the emancipation of women implicit in Westernization, it is being abandoned. Everywhere, and particularly in the urban centers, the youth is becoming less and less dependent on the family, and, with the active encouragement of the regime, frees itself from its control. Coeducational schools, participation in sports, the growing practice of social

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177 dating, employment of men and women in offices and stores — all these
562 factors tend to break down the wall between the sexes. The Muslim youth today is not only increasingly able to plan its future without regard to the wishes of parents, but also has many opportunities to mingle freely with members of the opposite sex. All this helps undermine the traditional-habits
517 in marriage selection. Among the urban Muslim intelligentsia it appears
583 now to be the rule for the young couples to decide upon marriage first and to ask parents for permission afterwards, as is done in Western societies. In the villages, where the hold of tradition is stronger and the family more closely knit, the parents still do play an important, and perhaps even decisive, role in the arrangement of marriages; but here, too, the tendency seems to run against tradition.

583 An influential factor in the marriage arrangement among Central Asian
177 Muslims was the *kalym*, or bride price. The *kalym* was paid to the parents of the bride by the parents of the bridegroom prior to the wedding. In the steppe regions, it consisted usually of livestock, averaging in pre-Revolutionary days from 50 to 100 horses and an equal or larger number of sheep — a sizeable fortune by local standards. In Turkestan, the *kalym* consisted of gifts of money, jewels, or other valuables. The payment of the *kalym* is one of the few traditions of a nonreligious nature outlawed by the Soviet regime, ostensibly as "degrading" to women, but its illegality explains only in part its actual decline, which is probably due more to the impoverishment of the native population over the past 25 years. What Kazakh disposes of 50 horses or sheep? Poverty seems to have reduced the tradition of the *kalym* to a purely symbolic significance. It apparently continues to survive in one form or another throughout Central Asia, but it no longer performs any important economic function.

836 One of the more startling results of information gathered from refugees
177 is the impression of strict sexual morality prevailing among Soviet Muslims. Despite the freer mingling of sexes, there is little opportunity for sexual promiscuity because of the close watch exercised over the girls by their families and the great value attached by the natives to virginity. Most of the refugees agreed that an unmarried Muslim girl who has lost her virginity — no matter under what circumstances — is considered to be on the same level as a common prostitute. Her chances of marriage are almost nonexistent, because it is generally accepted that a marriage contract is void if the bride is found on the wedding night not to be a virgin. On the whole, sexual licentiousness seems rare: it is prevented by tradition and by the control exercised by the family, to whom a deflowered daughter not only brings public disgrace but also represents a lasting financial liability.[4]

[4] Newspapers and periodicals from Central Asia indicate that, despite Soviet efforts aimed at changing native attitudes toward women, tradition persists. It seems apparently to be quite common practice for natives to withdraw daughters from school when the girls attain the

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So far as the Communist authorities are concerned, the actual wedding act should consist merely of a registration in the local office of the ZAGS (*Zapis' aktov grazhdanskogo sostoianiia* — Registry of Civil Acts); any festivities connected with it should preferably be organized by the local Young Communist League, Trade Union, or other organization to which the young couple belongs. In fact, however, the natives prefer to celebrate weddings in a more traditional manner. Among the inhabitants of the steppe and desert, for instance, it is still customary on the wedding day for the bride (properly veiled) to wait at her parents' home for the friends of the bridegroom to take her to her new home — but whereas before the Revolution she was transported on a camel or a horse, she is now brought to the wedding place in a rented automobile. It is still customary, while the wedding party is in progress, for the young pair to retire to a separate room, and there have sexual relations, in order to be able to prove to the relatives of both parties the virginity of the bride. The entire wedding ceremony in Central Asia assumes ever more the character of a purely secular festivity, but insofar as possible it is carried out within the framework of traditional nonreligious forms and rituals.

The food habits of the natives seem to have undergone little change. Through contact with Russians they have been exposed to such novel foods as potatoes, bread, and boiled eggs, but their preference is for traditional native dishes: pilau, kumys, etc. They are often compelled to eat Russian food, including pork, in government and other restaurants and in the army, but they avoid it if at all possible. The natives seem to prefer to partake of their main meal in the evening, rather than at midday, as the Russians are in the habit of doing.

In clothing the natives of Central Asia appear to tend in the direction of a synthesis of traditional and Western garb. The basic articles of wear, their cut, and ornamentation are native; but some items of clothing are adopted from the Russians. Adult males have almost everywhere taken to wearing leather shoes, which are superior in comfort and durability to their native counterparts; Muslim girls like to wear, together with their national costumes, Western-style blouses. Soviet sources report a general tendency on the part of natives to wear mixed clothing, part Western, part native — the former apparently for comfort, the latter for national identification. In the cities, especially among the youth, Western clothing predominates; in the village, the opposite is the case. In clothes, as in other customs, the principle enunciated earlier holds true: the natives discard what is patently inconvenient and adopt from the Russians what is more practical, i.e., Western. They do not discard traditions for reasons other than utility.

age of adolescence; the local press even reports occasionally instances of high-school graduating classes being completely devoid of girls, all of them having dropped out a few years earlier. See *Central Asian Review*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1953), pp. 47–53; vol. 2, no. 1 (1954), pp. 71–72.

352 The same principle applies to housing and furniture. The natives adopt
177 freely and widely articles of utility, such as kerosene lamps, samovars, and iron stoves. But they resist efforts of the authorities to introduce chairs, tables, and bedsteads, which to them seem quite unnecessary. "Not only those collective farm families sleep on the floor which as yet have no bedsteads," writes a recent Soviet observer of conditions in the Kirghiz republic. "Sometimes a purchased bedstead, instead of being used for its purpose, stands all made up as a decoration, while the family continues [353] sleeping on the floor." [2] Even the most Westernized Muslim intelligentsia in the cities demonstrate a desire to preserve a link with tradition by decorating a single room of an otherwise Western-style apartment in the native manner.

342 House construction among the old settled groups of the population seems
177 to follow traditional lines, with minor innovations, such as the use of whitewash for the walls and floors. Among the recently settled nomads, whom the Soviet regime wishes to have acquire permanent buildings, a curious compromise has been attained: the natives spend one part of their time in the permanent structures and another part in the traditional yurt (nomadic tent) erected alongside the houses. On the whole, one gains the impression that among the Turkic groups which had been settled during and since the period of collectivization, the yurt continues to prevail, while in the mountains it is still the exclusive shelter of native inhabitants.

183 The general picture which emerges from a survey of native customs
177 indicates that they are adhered to far more loyally than are religious traditions. The causes for this are threefold. In the first place, a considerable part of the native population of Central Asia was only superficially affected by Islam, while remaining loyal to local traditions. In the second place, national traditions are on the whole not contrary to the spirit of Westernization, and can in most cases be well adapted to the demands of a secular, utilitarian society. And, finally, the Soviet regime treats local customs far more gingerly than religion, trying to destroy them more through example and infiltration than through outright suppression. The native population clings to its customs, surrendering them only when they are utterly incompatible with material progress of society, and when it does modify traditions, it tries to synthesize the innovations with tradition. The native may be persuaded that it is a good thing to possess an iron bedstead, but often he cannot be convinced that sleeping on a bed is preferable to sleeping on the floor. Similarly, he may agree that eating by fork and spoon is hygenically preferable to eating by hand, but he refuses to agree that pork and potatoes are superior to lamb and rice. This attitude gives native customs a considerable resiliency to external pressures.

[2] S. M. Abramzon, *Ocherki kul'tury kirgizskogo naroda* (Frunze, 1946), p. 75. Abramzon's book supplies interesting data on the culture of the Kirghiz in the post-World War II era, much of which supports the conclusions derived from interviews with refugees.

1 [i.e., the discarding of traditions for no reasons other than utility -- Analyst]

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LANGUAGE

With the exception of the Tajiks, virtually all the Muslims of Central Asia speak local dialects of one and the same Turki language group. Varying cultural influences to which the individual subgroups have been subjected in the course of history have led to a certain differentiation in the vocabulary and grammar of the principal dialects. Uzbek especially, having been exposed to strong Iranian and Arabic influences, has changed much, even to the extent of losing the vowel harmony common to the sound system of the Turki languages. By and large, however, it is possible to speak of the Central Asian Muslims as possessing linguistic unity: the dialectical differences, significant as they are to the philologist, neither prevent effective communication among the Turkic inhabitants nor preclude the eventual emergence of a single Turki literary language for Central Asia. The latter, however, had not yet been formed when the Communists conquered Central Asia in the 1920's and suppressed its further development.

The importance of language for national consciousness is self-evident: language represents the most ready means of national identification, available alike to the literate and illiterate. While not absolutely indispensable for nationality (witness the Jews), it is so intimately connected with it as to make it one of nationality's very best criteria.

Soviet linguistic policy in Central Asia has two principal aspects, both of which follow closely the general lines of Soviet nationality policy. In the first place it strives at all costs to prevent the formation of a single Turki literary language in Central Asia on the assumption that such a language would serve as a powerful weapon for the forging of a united Central Asian national movement. In the second place, it endeavors to promote the acceptance of Russian as the primary language of communication among persons of different groups. The first goal is fostered by exploiting all, even the minutest, dialectical differences among the various Turkic subgroups, and by granting the status of full-fledged national-literary languages to local variants of one and the same Turki language. The second is fostered through the official change of Turki alphabets from Arabic to Latin, and then from Latin to the Russian Cyrillic; through the gradual introduction of Russian words in their original form and spelling into the native vocabularies; through compulsory Russian language instruction in all schools above the elementary level; and, finally, through the requirement of a good knowledge of Russian for all citizens, regardless of nationality, desirous of making any kind of a career. It is apparently the hope of the authorities that, given sufficient time, such policies will make Russian the language of all the socially dynamic elements of the Muslim population and relegate Turkic to the status of a peasant dialect devoid of political importance.

5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RLl Turkestan RLl

and relegate Turkic to the status of a peasant dialect devoid of political importance.[8]

This policy of linguistic Russification is far more subtle than that practiced by the tsarist regime in some of its borderlands during the darkest days of modern Russian autocracy (1881–1903), and, if successful, could deal a very considerable blow to Muslim prospects in Central Asia. Thirty-five years is admittedly too short a time to judge the effects of a set of measures apparently designed to operate for several generations; but certain evidence permits us to draw some conclusions about its efficacy and prospects of success.

Soviet linguistic policies seem to have had very little effect on the speech habits of the bulk of the Muslim *rural* population. Living in their own fairly closed communities, which offer little continuous contact with Russians, the Muslim peasants continue to use exclusively their local dialects. They seem to be as ignorant of Russian as their ancestors had been. None of the peasants interviewed knew more than a few words of Russian; after ten years in Germany several could speak better German than they could Russian after several decades of residence in the Soviet Union. For most of the rural Muslims in the USSR, the first important contact with Russians and the Russian language comes with entrance into military service. After being drafted they are distributed among Russian soldiers and are expected to learn the language as best they can. For many of them, the military service is the first and most efficient school of Russian.

The situation is somewhat different in the cities and small towns, where Muslims live side by side with Russians, and where a large proportion of Muslim youths attend high schools and institutions of higher learning. It is difficult to obtain a clear picture of the linguistic training in Central Asia, because it varies from area to area and from time to time. If there is a general principle, it seems to consist in a direct correlation between level of education and Russian language instruction. In the elementary schools, the instruction is predominantly in the prevailing local language, either Turki or Russian, and in areas where both groups are numerous, in both. In the secondary schools Russian is either the principal language of instruction (in schools attended largely by Russian students) or else it is taught

[8] An alternate interpretation of Soviet linguistic policies in Central Asia is suggested by a British authority, G. E. Wheeler: "[The Soviet authorities] evidently hope to achieve by russification an effect similar to that produced by the 'Arabization' of the indigenous languages of the peoples who came under Arab Islamic domination. The adoption of the Arabic script and of numerous Arabic words and phrases was a powerful factor in the perpetuation of Islam, and thus of Arab culture, even after the tide of Arab conquest had receded. But it was the *result* of conversion to Islam, not the cause, and while the Arabs may have insisted on the use of Arabic for official purposes, just as Tsarist Russia and Britain insisted on the use of Russian and English, there is no evidence that they ever instituted a policy of Arabization of existing languages. The Soviet government is attempting to achieve the same end by arbitrary means: it is insisting on the russification of Central Asian languages by the introduction of the Cyrillic script and Russian loanwords; and it even envisages the modification of grammar and phonetics." G. E. Wheeler, "Cultural Developments in Soviet Central Asia," *Royal Central Asian Journal*, vol. 41 (July–Oct. 1954), p. 181.

5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RLI Turkestan RLI

as an important second (but "foreign") language; passing a Russian language examination seems to be a graduation prerequisite for all high-school students, regardless of nationality. Every graduate of a Soviet high school is thus expected to possess a knowledge of Russian. Whether or not this knowledge actually exists probably depends more on what the student does after graduation than upon the intensity or quality of his training. For the average Muslim girl who marries a Muslim and then raises a family, her high-school Russian language instruction is wasted, for at home she speaks her native tongue and soon forgets all she has learned; the same is probably true of the Muslim youth who returns to the village after his studies. For the more enterprising wage earner, however, the Russian training is of greater and more lasting importance: it represents the key to all further academic or professional advancement, as well as to membership in the vast party and state apparatus, which comprise and circumscribe a "career" in Soviet society.[7]

At one time the Communists made serious attempts in the direction of founding university-level training in the native languages, but these endeavors were not very successful, in part because of the shortage of qualified native teaching personnel and in part as a result of the general trend in the direction of Russification. Today most of the university-level instruction, except that which by its very content requires the use of local languages (Central Asian archeology, anthropology, philology, folklore, etc.), appears to be conducted in Russian.

A young Muslim, in order to succeed in life, must learn Russian and learn it well. Among the Muslim intelligentsia, therefore, a knowledge of Russian is widespread. But — and this is essential for the present inquiry — by acquiring a knowledge of Russian the local Muslims do not, as is apparently anticipated by the regime, lose command of their own language; instead, they become bilingual. Russian is the language of business, and the means through which it is possible to establish some contact with the culture of the outside world; it is not the language of daily life, in use at home, in the family, and among friends. The refugee informants were unanimous in asserting that neither they nor their friends, even those active in the Party, ever spoke Russian elsewhere than at work. They were equally firm in maintaining that they knew no Muslims who had lost command of their native speech. This assertion is reinforced by the observation that the Muslim refugees in Germany do not communicate

[7] According to the *Central Asian Review*, admission to the State University of Turkmenia and the Turkmen Academy of Sciences is "dependent upon students passing an examination in Russian and Russian literature." On the other hand, "Russian students at the Academy of Sciences are only required to have a knowledge of the Turkmen language if they intend to make a special study of Turkmen language and literature." There is no reason to suppose that the pattern is different in the other republics of Central Asia. *Central Asian Review*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1953), pp. 65–66.

5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RL1 Turkestan RL1

191
517 with each other in Russian, even on occasions when, because of diverse ethnic origins, communication in Turki presents considerable difficulties.

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517 It is as yet too early to estimate the effects of Soviet linguistic policy aimed at Russification through methods which are both negative (division of Muslim groups) and positive (the imposition of Russian through compulsion, linguistic infiltration, and career inducements). On the eve of World War II the Muslim rural masses seemed to have been quite unaffected by Soviet linguistic measures, and so were the poorer and less educated elements in the cities. These groups continued, as before, to communicate exclusively in their native dialects, being ignorant of Russian. Soviet policies did cause the numerous and growing Muslim intelligentsia to acquire a working knowledge of Russian; but instead of becoming Russified these groups became bilingual, using Russian for the purposes of work, and Turki or Persian, as the case may be, for all other purposes. Of linguistic assimilation there does not seem the slightest evidence; on the contrary, all signs point to a remarkable ability of the local languages to survive in the face of strong external pressures.

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MUSLIMS OF SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA: TRENDS AND PROSPECTS

Richard Pipes

Part II

ETHNIC IDENTITY OF CENTRAL ASIAN MUSLIMS

UNTIL THE BEGINNING of the 20th century, Central Asia preserved its ethnic homogeneity remarkably well. The tsarist government discouraged the migration of Slavs into the steppe region for fear of native rebellions, while Turkestan, which in the centuries prior to Russian conquest had been one of the world's most isolated areas, virtually closed to non-Muslims, absorbed only a small trickle of Russian officials and merchants. Khiva and Bukhara continued even after the establishment of the Russian protectorate to admit only a small number of Russians. At the turn of the century Muslims formed over 90 percent of the total population of all Central Asia; in Turkestan itself they accounted for 97 percent of all the inhabitants.[8] (See Table I.)

Perhaps the most significant single change which has occurred in Central Asia during the last half century has been the destruction of its ethnic homogeneity, brought about by Russian and Ukrainian immigration.

The first great migratory wave of Russians entered between 1906 and 1911, during the ministry of P. Stolypin, as a result of the deliberate effort of the tsarist regime to reduce the land hunger of the Russian villages by

[8] These statistics, and those which follow are based mainly on three sources: *Aziatskaia Rossiia*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1914); *Ts. St. Upr. SSSR. Narodnost' i rodnoi iazyk naseleniia SSSR* (Moscow, 1928); and *Strany mira* (Moscow, 1946).

Table I: RUSSIAN AND NATIVE POPULATION OF CENTRAL ASIA

(Including estimates for Khiva and Bukhara; in round figures)

	1897	*1911*	*1926*	*1939*
Muslims	9,300,000	10,400,000	10,700,000	c. 11,700,000
Russians	700,000	2,000,000	2,700,000	c. 4,500,000
Others	300,000	600,000	300,000	c. 400,000
Total	10,300,000	13,000,000	13,700,000	16,600,000

◆ RICHARD PIPES is Research Associate of the Russian Research Center and Tutor in History and Literature, Harvard University. Part I of "Muslims of Soviet Central Asia: Trends and Prospects" was published in the April 1955 issue of the JOURNAL.

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167 settling some of their excess population in the sparsely inhabited steppe regions of Central Asia. This colonizing enterprise brought to Central Asia about 1 million peasants, most of whom made their home in the eastern parts of the steppe region and in the Semirechensk province of Turkestan. The newcomers were provided by the government with generous land allotments (transferred from the Crown, which claimed as its property all the nomadic grazing lands) and inventory, and settled in compact villages, apart from the Kazakh-Kirghiz natives, most of whom continued their traditional nomadic or seminomadic habits. The colonization program had only a limited success, for after the outbreak of World War I the large-scale Russian influx into the steppe regions ceased; the Russians living in the Kazakh Republic in 1939 still consisted in their majority of the original
161 Stolypin colonists or their direct descendants. The proportion of Russians in the total population of the steppe region would not have grown appreciably, therefore, were it not for the fact that the upheavals which had occurred in that area during World War I and the Russian Revolution (the 1916 Kazakh-Kirghiz revolt, and the famine of 1920–21) led to a considerable decrease in the native population. While the Kazakh-Kirghiz population remained virtually constant between 1911 and 1926, the local Russian population increased during the same period through natural growth by one-fourth. As a result of these demographic changes, Muslims constituted by 1926 only two-thirds of the population of the Kazakh Republic. (See Table II.)

167 Turkestan succeeded in maintaining its ethnic homogeneity somewhat
162 longer than the steppe region. The Russian influx into Turkestan prior to the Revolution was predominantly urban, consisting of officials, merchants, military personnel, and other groups connected with this area's administration and economic development. Thus, in 1926 the Russians still constituted merely 7.4 percent of the population of Turkestan.

The next important change in the demography of Central Asia occurred around 1930 as a consequence of Russian immigration and the further decrease of the native population. The Russians who migrated into Central Asia during this period were both victims of collectivization seeking to find refuge and to make a living on the Asiatic frontier, and settlers who followed in the wake of the newly constructed Turkestan-Siberian (Turksib) railroad. These migrants — whose number may be tentatively esti-

162 *Table II:* DISTRIBUTION OF THE RUSSIAN POPULATION IN CENTRAL ASIA
(Including estimates for Khiva and Bukhara; in round figures)

	1897	*1911*	*1926*	*1939*
Steppe	500,000	1,600,000	2,100,000	c. 2,600,000
Turkestan	200,000	400,000	600,000	c. 1,900,000
Percent of Russians in total population of Central Asia	6.8	15.3	19.7	c. 27.1

5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RL1 Turkestan RL1

mated between 1926 and 1939 at 1,300,000 — settled not in the steppe but in Turkestan. While the 1939 census did not provide ethnographic breakdowns for the individual republics (with one exception noted below [9]), it is possible, by comparing the growth of the population within the individual republics with the total growth of the major Central Asian ethnic groups (both reported by Soviet sources), to arrive at a reasonably close estimate of the distribution of the Russian newcomers:

In the Uzbek Republic	720,000
In the Kirghiz Republic	285,000
In the Tajik Republic	155,000
In the Turkmen Republic	135,000

More than one-half of the migrants, in other words, settled in the Uzbek Republic, where in all probability most of them moved into the towns (Tashkent especially) and the expanding industrial centers of the Ferghana valley. In the Tajik and Turkmen Republics most of the Russian newcomers probably also settled in the cities, while in Kirghizia, where there were numerous Russian agricultural settlements of pre-Revolutionary vintage, they moved into the countryside as well (the total urban population of the Kirghiz Republic grew, between 1926 and 1939, only by 150,000, whereas the total Russian population there increased in the same period by an estimated 285,000 immigrants).

Another factor which increased the ratio of Russians to Muslims in Central Asia was the decline in the Muslim population of the steppe due to the terrors of the period of collectivization. According to Soviet census statistics, the Kazakh population of the Soviet Union decreased between 1926 and 1939 from 3,960,000 to 3,099,000 — a decline of about a million and a half if one takes into consideration the normal rate of growth.

Thus, by 1939 the Muslims probably formed less than one-half of the inhabitants in the steppe region and about four-fifths of those in Turkestan. The ratio of Muslims to Russians in all of Central Asia dropped from 15 to 1 in 1897 to less than 4 to 1 in 1939. Obviously, such a rapid demographic change was bound to have profound effects on the ability of the natives to preserve their ethnic identity, the more so since the influx of Russians appears to have continued undiminished after 1939, becoming particularly rapid during the period of war-time evacuation (1942–44) and the new program of Russian and Ukrainian settlement in the Kazakh steppes since 1952.

On the face of it, Russian migration threatens the natives with eventual destruction. Central Asia appears to be faced with ethnic Russification,

[9] The Turkmen SSR is the exception. Official Soviet statistics for 1939, when the total population of this republic was 1,251,900, break down its ethnic structure as follows: Turkmen 59.2 percent; Russians 18.7 percent; Uzbeks 8.5 percent; Kazakhs 4.9 percent; other nationalities 8.7 percent. Z. G. Freikin, *Turkmenskaia SSR* (Moscow, 1954), p. 84.

5: Pipes S-4 (1953) 1955 RLl Turkestan RLl

which may bring about the complete assimilation of the natives. However, in order to determine the effect of the Russian influx upon the natives it is necessary to go beyond mere statistics and to analyze the nature and scope of relations between these two groups. What matters is not so much how many Russians come to live in Central Asia, but whether, through intermarriage, social contact, cultural and other means, they actually exercise a denationalizing influence upon the Muslims. The answer to this question is not as discouraging for Muslim prospects as might appear from the mere survey of demographic statistics.

The Russians who migrate into Central Asia do not displace the natives, but settle side by side with them. The Russo-Ukrainian influx into Central Asia resembles not so much a demographic inundation, which gradually spreads over and submerges the whole native population, as a stream which penetrates the area following the path of least resistance and covers the regions which are least populated. It thus splits the population into two unequal parts, both of which retain their national character.

As has been pointed out above, the Russians inhabiting the steppe region in 1939 were largely the descendants of the pre-1914 colonists, living in the separate Russo-Ukrainian villages (now collectivized) or in the predominantly Russian-inhabited cities. When the Kazakhs were collectivized in the 1930's, and in many instances forcefully settled as well, they were formed into separate *kolkhozy* (collective farms), apart from the old and established Russo-Ukrainian villages. The establishment of ethnically mixed collectives was impractical, partly because the Russians were already settled in their own communities and partly because the basis of the native economy, sheep and livestock grazing, was different from that of the predominantly agricultural Russian villages.[10] The overwhelming majority of the Russian and Kazakh peasants in Kazakhstan, therefore, continues to live in separate settlements. Interviews with refugees from this region indicate that until the outbreak of World War II, at any rate, there were practically no ethnically mixed *kolkhozy*, although closely situated villages were frequently combined for administrative purposes into a single *sel'sovet* (village soviet), even when consisting of differing ethnic groups. Occasionally stray Russians may be found working on Kazakh collectives: doctors, nurses, bookkeepers, and so forth — as often as not persons who found it expedient for one reason or another to leave their native regions. Kazakh shepherds and laborers are also employed by some Russian collectives. But these are cases affecting individuals which do not change the general picture of ethnic separation in the rural areas.

[10] Attempts to mix collectives apparently had little success: "Instead of organizing the greatest possible mutual assistance of Russian and Kazakh collective farms," writes an official Kazakh Republic publication, "[the authorities] permitted instances of formation of international collective farms, ignoring the fact that the mass of the collective farmers was not as yet prepared for them." *10 let Kazakhstana — 1920–1930* (Alma-Ata, 1930), p. 216.

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The situation is somewhat different in the *sovkhozy* (state farms), which are operated like large enterprises with hired labor (there were 191 *sovkhozy* in the Kazakh Republic in 1938). The *sovkhozy* carry out diversified agricultural functions, and hire many Muslims to tend the sheep and livestock — a task they can carry out better than the Russians workers. They also employ some Muslim white-collar workers.

A similar picture of ethnic separation exists in Turkestan. In pre-Revolutionary times the Russians moving into the cities of Turkestan followed the custom of Europeans in other colonial areas of the world, and rather than make their home in the Oriental quarters, insanitary and overcrowded by Western standards, or build new cities from scratch, they constructed separate European sections adjoining the native towns. In this way, nearly all the cities in Turkestan were split into two halves: native, or Old, and European, or New. Significant exceptions to this rule were only Vernyi (Alma-Ata), whose geographic location did not permit the planning of a separate Russian sector, and Kokand, in the Ferghana valley, which the Russians left entirely to the natives, erecting the European town some 8 miles away, in Skobelev (Fergana). After the advent of the Communists this basic pattern remained, with one important change: leaving the Old and the New sections of the towns intact, the Soviet authorities constructed in most towns new quarters to house the officials, employees, and other privileged elements of Soviet society, who are predominantly, but not exclusively, European. Thus, most Central Asian towns today are divided into three parts: one predominantly native, another predominantly European, and a third one mixed, with Europeans dominant. The new quarters house alike native and Russian employees of the state; the natives living there, however, belong exclusively to the so-called "intelligentsia," which is Westernized and bilingual and constitutes a relatively small segment of the total native urban population. The majority of Russians and of natives continue, as before the Revolution, to live in their respective quarters, though the lines separating these quarters seem less sharp than they were before. A general mixing of the urban population has certainly not occurred.

As a result of this situation, the large influx of Russians into the cities does not have the effect of submerging the native population. Rather it leads to a great expansion of the European and Soviet sectors, a development which has no direct effect upon the native parts of the towns. The settlement of newcomers in the native quarters is quite unlikely, if only because of the overcrowding which prevails in almost all of them, as in most Oriental towns.

The next question which arises is whether, despite the residential separation, the Russians and Muslims actually assimilate through intermarriage and social contact. Here we must rely for answers entirely on interview material.

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563 186 177 Intermarriage is by far the most effective means of breaking down ethnic barriers. Prior to the Revolution, Russians and Muslims did not intermarry. If the interviews are correct, this continues to be the case today. A number of factors prevent intermarriage: the enormous cultural gap between Russians and Muslims, which ranges from such everyday matters as language, food, and type of residence to more subtle differences of national character and sexual customs; the considerable control which Muslim parents continue to exercise over their female children; and the great difficulty which a mixed family would have in finding a place in the Muslim or Russian community. The informants unanimously agreed that in Central Asia marriage between a Muslim girl and a Russian would be utterly unthinkable, since it would be prevented by the parents and the male relatives of the girl. Several of the refugee informants stated the opinion that a girl who would evade parental disapproval and marry a Russian would be assassinated by her male relatives; one recalled a specific instance of an Uzbek opera star who was killed by her brother for having married a Russian. Intermarriage is considered an insult to the family and to the nation. As one informant put it: "There are never enough girls for all the available Muslim suitors anyway; if a Muslim girl married a Russian that would mean that we weren't good enough for her." [11] None of the informants — who, it must be remembered, came from the ranks of the most Westernized Central Asian Muslims — knew personally any native girl who had married a Russian.

It appears much easier for a Muslim male to marry a Russian woman, and in some cases this happens because of the shortage of Muslim girls and the not inconsiderable number of Russian widows and prostitutes living in Central Asia. But such occurrences, too, seem rather rare. The informants who knew of such cases could recall only instances of Muslims living with Russian women without benefit of formal marriage; such Muslims are largely people whose homes have been broken up and who live with their wives or mistresses outside both Muslim and Russian communities.

The fact that the mere act of marrying an outsider leads to instant exclusion from the two dominant communities and forces the family to live in a social no-man's land is a strong deterrent to intermarriage. Consequently, the overwhelming majority of Russians and Muslims in Central Asia marry persons of their own ethnic group. Intermarriage appears very rare; insofar as it exists at all, it seems confined to the marginal groups of society, to persons who lack families and hence have little contact with their respective ethnic groups, or those who have left Central Asia and taken up residence in other parts of the Soviet Union.

162 [11] Indeed, the ratio of males to females in Central Asia was always high: in 1926 the proportion was 10 to 9 in favor of the males. Among the Russians, on the other hand, the ratio is reversed.

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Social contact, too, seems to be limited, even among the groups which by virtue of their occupation are constantly in touch with representatives of other nationalities. Muslim refugees who had been employed in Soviet agencies and offices together with Russians were unanimous in asserting that contact with the Russians ceased after working hours. Much the same seems to be the case among soldiers on active service in peace time. 563

Russo-Muslim relations vary considerably, depending upon the social status and level of education of the groups concerned. On the whole, the interviews indicate that national friction is in an inverse ratio to social status and education: the higher the status, the less friction. Racial hostility appears strongest among the poorest rural inhabitants, among the plain soldiers, and the unskilled laborers; it seems least prevalent among the intelligentsia, the state and party officials, the well-to-do peasants and workers, and the army officers. By and large the refugees — despite their strong anti-Russian bias — agreed that the relations between Russians and Muslims are good, and they attached little significance to various incidents of national friction which, being prompted, they had been able to recall. There seems to be a deep-seated feeling that whatever the differences dividing them, both these groups suffer from the same regime, that they are "in the same boat." 563 565

In the universities, *vuzy*, *tekhnikums*, and other places where work is combined with residence, Muslims and Russians frequently tend to separate from each other on their own initiative. A number of refugees reported that Muslim and Russian students, when given the choice, preferred to live in separate dormitories. 563 871

The greatest single Russifying force in the Soviet Union is the army. In the 1920's, in the initial stage of the Soviet nationality policy, the Communists had created separate military divisions for the major nationality groups in the USSR. These units were gradually broken up in the early 1930's, first by withdrawing regiments and battalions from their national commands and dispersing them among other regular Soviet divisions, and then by disbanding their commanding staffs as well. From then until World War II there were no separate national units. At one time in the course of World War II, when Soviet military fortunes were at their nadir, attempts were made to create separate all-Muslim units in Turkestan, possibly to serve as Home Guards. However, as soon as the Soviet army began to gain the initiative at the front, the formation of these units was suspended, and its personnel was eventually dispersed in the regular Red army. Since the 1930's the army has scattered Muslim draftees throughout regular Soviet units in such a manner that no more than a few Muslims are assigned to any one infantry company; Muslim officers, too, are distributed as thinly as possible. 701 563 177

Naturally, such a system does not permit Muslim recruits to maintain

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701 177 563 their ethnic separateness. For many a Muslim, entry into military service represents the first contact with an alien nationality. The Muslim recruit is expected at once to understand Russian commands, even though he is often completely ignorant of Russian. This linguistic difficulty, coupled with the general ineptitude of most Central Asian Muslims for army life (due to the exemption granted them in tsarist days), makes military service for many a shocking and bewildering experience. Sooner or later, however, most Muslims, except the dullest or most recalcitrant, learn enough Russian to get along and communicate with their Russian superiors and comrades. Several of the refugees stated that they had first learned Russian in the army; for some others, the army was actually the first experience with life outside their own Muslim communities. On many recruits the effect of such an experience, though violent, is not long-lasting; having completed his military service, the recruit returns to his village and soon forgets most of what he has learned. For others, however, it constitutes a radical break which affects their entire life. The Red army represents the only Soviet institution — save for the forced labor camps — where Muslim and Russian societies are forcibly compressed together, and where the cultural and ethnic walls usually separating them are to some extent broken down.

697 563 Evidence obtained from refugees who had lived in Soviet concentration camps and Nazi prisoner-of-war camps indicates that in conditions of great distress the ethnic barriers break down most rapidly, for in neither was there much separation between Muslims and Russians.[12] After an initial period of very harsh treatment by the Germans as "Asiatics," the Central Asians were separated out by the Germans under the influence of Turkestani émigré organizations and were formed into numerous small military units, commanded by Germans; these units served as military police and anti-partisan units and in some cases as front-line combat units.

178 162 An important factor in the demography of Central Asia is the settlement of the nomadic and seminomadic populations of the steppe and desert regions. The abandonment of nomadic habits had begun long before the Revolution; one of the main themes in the entire history of the Turkic tribes since their appearance in Central Asia and the Middle East a thousand years ago is the gradual transition from pure nomadism to a settled existence. This process was in part caused by the encroachment of agricultural peoples of neighboring territories upon the extensive nomadic lands, with the resultant shrinkage of grazing areas, and in part by the economic advantages to be derived from a combination of cattle and sheep

697 563 [12] More recent evidence, however, indicates that this has not been the case in Soviet forced labor camps since World War II. Repatriated inmates of Vorkuta, one of the largest Soviet forced labor camps, indicate that national differences are very prominent in the camp, and the prisoners tend to group strictly along national or religious lines. See, for instance, J. Scholmer, *Vorkuta* (New York, 1955). It is not certain whether this contradiction is due to some unknown factors operating in post-World War II camps, or whether there is no clear-cut pattern permitting generalization on this subject.

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herding with agriculture. Both these factors caused a rapid decline in nomadism in Central Asia in the latter half of the 19th century, under Russian rule. In 1926 (i.e., on the eve of collectivization) in Kazakhstan — the main area of nomadism — 26 percent of all the Kazakh families were fully settled, 66 percent practiced nomadism in the summers (transhumance), and only the remaining 6 percent to 8 percent were nomadic the year around. Of the major group, i.e., those practicing summer nomadism, more than two-thirds moved within a 25-kilometer radius of their winter quarters.[13] Soviet collectivization thus completed a process of settlement that was already well on its way, and given another few decades might have been accomplished quite naturally. A by-product of settlement is the decline of the tribe as a unit of social organization, and with it the disappearance of the tribal divisions and feuds which in the past have constituted one of the most serious deterrents to the development of a national consciousness among the Central Asian natives. The natives of the steppe and desert chafe greatly under the severe limitations imposed upon their movement by the Soviet regime, and, given freedom, would probably like to return at least in part to some form of nomadism; nevertheless, the tribal structure is probably destroyed beyond repair. This fact greatly strengthens the development of modern nationalism.

Thus, despite the considerable Russian influx into Central Asia, the Muslims living there appear to maintain their ethnic distinctiveness. This is thanks both to the character of Russian settlement, which leads to the establishment of Russian centers *side by side* rather than *among* the natives, and to the wide cultural gap, which hinders intermarriage and more intimate social contact. Indeed, it may be said that Russian migration and Soviet policies have rather contributed to the development of national consciousness, first by exposing all natives to contact with representatives of an alien culture and thus forcing them to question their own status, and secondly by helping to destroy — through settlement — the tribal divisions which had always been a most formidable obstacle to native unity vis-à-vis the foreigner.

THE INTELLIGENTSIA

An important factor in the transformation of an ethnic group into a full-fledged nation with a developed sense of national consciousness is an articulate class with sufficient education and experience to provide the population with intellectual leadership. In societies which have only recently begun to undergo such a transformation, this function is usually assumed by what the Russians call "intelligentsia" — a class composed of individuals of diverse social background whom a common middle or higher education, qualifying it for professional or white-collar work, turns into a new social estate.

[13] *10 let Kazakhstana*, pp. 82–83.

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5/7 G68 The Russian Muslims already possessed such a class[1] prior to 1917, consisting largely of professional people, especially lawyers, teachers, journalists, and engineers from the Kazan and Baku areas. This intelligentsia played a leading role in the Muslim national movements during the Revolution and the period immediately following it; many of its members cooperated with the Soviet regime in the 1920's, during the era of Communist "softness" toward Muslim nationalism; others, especially those who had been connected with the White Guard movement during the Civil War, went into hiding or disassociated themselves from all further political activity.

5/7 G61 Most of the older Muslim intelligentsia of the Soviet Union — pro-Communist and anti-Communist alike — was physically destroyed in the course of the purges, arrests, deportations, and executions of the 1930's. On the eve of World War II Soviet Muslims found themselves without national leadership, since the only other classes capable of providing it — the landowners, merchants, and the clergy — had also been liquidated in the course of the simultaneous drives for collectivization and against the Islamic religion in the late 1920's and early 1930's.

It is a perennial dilemma of the Soviet system that its dynamic totalitarianism requires an unusually large body of trained officials, and yet it cannot permit these officials the freedom of thought and action which they demand in consequence of their training. The principal solution which Communism has so far been able to devise for this problem consists of periodic purges, causing the destruction of the established bureaucracy and its replacement with ever new personnel — a procedure very costly in terms of manpower, but roughly serving the purpose for which it is devised. However, the system of purges, mass as well as local, requires constant repetition, for purge as it may, the Soviet regime cannot alter the fact that the intelligentsia, whose growth it is actively promoting, chafes under the yoke of totalitarianism and constitutes one of the major sources of tension within the established order.

5/7 It is this feature of its system which compelled the Soviet regime to replace the old intelligentsia of Central Asian Muslims destroyed by it with a new one. The new intelligentsia is largely Soviet-educated, and comprises people most of whom are today under 40 years of age. This new intelligentsia is, by comparison with the old, pre-Revolutionary one, very numerous. According to Soviet statistics for 1939, in the 5 republics of Central Asia there were 66,000 active students in technical and other specialized schools above the high-school level, and 35,000 active students in universities and other institutions of higher learning. Central Asia also had 758,000 persons with a completed high-school education and 57,000 with a completed higher education. Even allowing that a sizable proportion of these persons consists of Russians and other Europeans, the number of Muslims among them must be very considerable. Measured by Western European

[1] [i.e., an intelligentsia -- Analyst]

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standards, the training of these "intellectuals," even graduates of universities, is quite poor. What matters, however, is not their level of knowledge, but their position vis-à-vis the rest of the population and the attitudes and aspirations resulting from their training.

Evidence indicates that the graduates of schools consider themselves superior to manual labor, and expect to be rewarded for their schooling with administrative or other office work. The Muslim intellectual seems to feel that education entitles one not so much to greater rewards as to a reduction of the working load. It is a professional intelligentsia which aspires to national leadership and is strongly interested in political action.

The Central Asian Muslim intelligentsia possesses many of the characteristics which distinguish the Soviet intelligentsia as a whole, but in addition it also displays certain traits engendered by special conditions prevailing in Central Asia.

The Muslim intelligentsia occupies in Central Asia a peculiar position: by origin, language, culture, and family ties, it is connected to the Muslim population; by training, work, and much of its world-outlook, it is identified with the Soviet regime. It thus belongs fully to neither of the two groups, constituting something of a third element which functions as a connecting link between the Russian-dominated regime and the native population. Such a class had existed, of course, in Central Asia prior to the Revolution, and it arises in most colonial systems, but it has never before been so numerous and ubiquitous as it is in Soviet Central Asia. What are its ideas, attitudes, and prospects? Upon the answer to this question depends to a large extent whether the potentialities of a Muslim revival in Central Asia can ever be realized.

Evidence secured from interviews indicates that Muslim intellectuals in Central Asia consider themselves full-fledged Europeans. Startling as this may be to a Westerner, it must be remembered that to many an Asian "Europe" means not so much a geographic concept as a way of life, characterized by technology and secularism, which had been brought to Asia by Europeans. None of the Central Asian refugees interviewed considered himself to be an Asian, and several took offence at the very suggestion that this may be the case. Most of the refugees have a vivid contempt for the non-Soviet East. For instance, several of the refugees who had served in the Soviet army in Iran during World War II spoke with utter contempt of the natives of that country as "Asiatics." Even Turkey, where several of the DP's found refuge after the war, appeared to them backward and "Oriental." Many Muslim DP's left Turkey for Germany or the United States after having been received there with open arms, because, as they put it, they found life there strange and difficult.

Despite its superficial Westernization and Sovietization, this new intelligentsia has not severed the ties binding it to the remainder of Muslim society in Central Asia. It is connected with the population culturally: the in-

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517 177 186 tellectuals communicate with each other in the local Turki dialects, not in Russian; they retain the customs, traditions, and other cultural traits previously discussed; they marry Muslims. They also retain a sense of loyalty to their people, a loyalty which is sufficiently strong to be seemingly unaffected by the close ties between the intellectuals and the regime. It is noteworthy that the majority of the refugees, though outspokenly anti-Communist in their sentiments, agreed that there is little friction between Muslim Communists and the rest of the Muslim population. The population does not transfer its dislike of the regime to its individual Muslim representatives, nor does it seem to regard Muslim Communists as apostates. On the contrary, Muslim Party members are regarded rather as friends and protectors, capable of shielding the inhabitants from the full brunt of Soviet policies. Many refugees recalled instances of receiving special consideration from Muslim Communists. The population is inclined to regard Muslims connected with the Communist machine as unwitting instruments of an evil system and to judge them entirely on their individual merits. Conversely, interrogation of Muslim refugees who had at one time belonged to the Communist Party indicates that in their minds they have not changed their national status by virtue of their Party allegiance. The notion of an all-embracing "Soviet" patriotism, fostered by the regime in its borderlands, apparently has had little if any success among the intellectuals.

This combination of Westernism and ethnic loyalty leads to the development of a sense of national consciousness on the part of the intelligentsia. However, because of Soviet cultural measures in the borderlands, this feeling appears to be as yet rather formless, inchoate, and devoid of a well formulated ideology.

517 175 177 For one thing, the Muslim intelligentsia is woefully ignorant of the history of Turkestan. This is hardly surprising, since the first histories of that area were published only after World War II (if one excepts the very scholarly and inaccessible monographs of Bartold and a few other scholars). The Soviet government deliberately minimizes the history of the Central Asian Turks and exaggerates the role of the Russian conqueror in order to undermine local nationalism and facilitate Russification. But the effect of these measures appears to be quite the opposite of what the Communists intend. Objectively speaking, the history of Turkestan is largely the story of the gradual conquest and destruction of a great Iranian civilization by barbarian Turkic nomads, resulting in perpetual internecine wars, isolation from the rest of the world, and cultural petrification of that area. In other words, the history of the Central Asian Turks is by no means a glorious one, either politically or culturally. By suppressing the study of native history, the regime actually helps stimulate the imagination of the native population. Ignorant of the facts, the natives glorify their past and create a mental picture of greatness which is quite unwarranted

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by the historical record. Several of the more educated refugees presented a completely distorted conception of Central Asian history; it was so idealized as to be a model for the stimulation of nationalist emotions.

The refugees also know very little about Central Asian history of recent times. The jadidist movement, the All-Russian Muslim movement, the events of the Revolution and civil war, the Kokand and Alash-Orda governments, are meaningless names to most of them. Most of the younger refugees knew of these events from the Soviet trials of the 1930's; none of them knew what these parties really stood for. *Basmachestvo* [14] was somewhat better known, because of its resurgence during the period of collectivization. Almost all of the refugees from Central Asia had had some personal experiences with the Basmachis, and could discuss the activities of these rebels in their region, though also tending to exaggerate their feats.

CONCLUSIONS

Speaking broadly, Soviet Central Asia may be said to have undergone in the course of the past fifty years two parallel developments: the native population has been transformed from a loose agglomeration of diverse tribes and ill-defined ethnic groups into several distinct nationalities, and the Russians residing in Central Asia have grown from an insignificant minority to an important segment of the total population. Both these developments are intimately connected; both may be expected to continue in the foreseeable future.

The first of these two processes has been by and large encouraged by the Soviet authorities because of their fear of pan-Islamism and pan-Turanianism. Faced with the choice of a movement aspiring to integrate all the Central Asian natives into a single nationality bound by the ties of a common religion or racial descent, and the formation of several separate nationalities, they selected the latter alternative as less dangerous to their political hold on the area. This course, however, had its price, for it compelled the Communists to encourage the growth of national consciousness among the major native ethnic groups.

But it would be a mistake to seek in Soviet strategy the *cause* of this process of nationality formation. The cause lies far deeper. The growth of nationalism in Central Asia, as in other parts of the world recently affected by European ideas, institutions, and technology, must above all be ascribed to the fact that the encounter of Westernism and tradition rarely results in a clear-cut victory for either force, but rather leads to a synthesis of both. *Nationalism represents such a synthesis of imported Western and traditional native values.* It owes its success to the fact that it permits the adoption of all the essential features of European civilization

[14] *Basmachestvo* was a native resistance movement directed against the Soviet regime; it was particularly active in the period 1918–1922. See Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), pp. 178–80, 255–60.

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177 without the surrender of the local ethos. It is strongest and most vital in
668 societies which, like the mid-20th-century Muslims of Central Asia, are in the very throes of this process of cultural fusion.

The Russian influx, uninterrupted since the beginning of the present
167 century, does not hinder this development except where it is accompanied by
177 large-scale physical destruction of the natives (as was the case with the
668 Kazakhs). On the contrary, it rather strengthens it. In the Central Asian context, the Russian population with its Russian culture must be regarded primarily as an agent of Westernization, and hence as a force accelerating the transition of the natives to full-fledged nationhood. The Russians not only tend to promote the spread of such ideas as secularism, utility, and anti-traditionalism, but also by their very presence and cultural cohesion, to induce the native to define his own national status. The Russian influx thus has not led to the emergence of a new, third nationality, "Soviet" in its culture, but to the split of the population of Central Asia into two parts: this split has tended to crystallize the national consciousness of both groups.

178 Without indulging in the dangerous and fruitless game of prediction
668 (which always presupposes some degree of historical pre-determination),
648 it is still possible, on the basis of the evidence adduced above, to arrive at some general political conclusions from the cultural tendencies discernible in Soviet Central Asia.

In the first place, Soviet Central Asia may be expected to grow in importance as an internal problem for the regimes, present and future, ruling Russia and its possessions. The Muslim natives, formed into full-fledged nationalities with settled populations, well-defined cultures, and indigenous intelligentsias, will be far more troublesome to their rulers than the disunited, half-nomadic, Islam-dominated Muslim tribes and ethnic groups of the past have been. In the second place, the entire area of Central Asia, including Chinese Turkestan with which Russian Central Asia has always been closely connected, may well tend to move with time in the direction of independent statehood. It is not inconceivable that this vast territory may same day be encompassed in a new Turkic, Muslim state, oriented toward the Middle East, and serving as a buffer among Russia, China, and India. In the past this has been prevented by Russian conquest and Russia's policy of supporting Chinese authority in Sinkiang out of fear of British and Japanese activity in this sensitive region. With Britain and Japan out of Central Asia, Russo-Chinese cooperation may be less intensive than before, and any possible disagreements among the great powers bordering on this area will only benefit the national aspirations of the local Muslims. Whether or not this will occur cannot, of course, be foreseen. But so long as the Central Asian Muslims continue to preserve their cultural peculiarities and, under Communist pressures, to evolve the characteristics of modern nationalities, as they have done in Soviet territories, so long will the cultural and ethnic bases for such a development be present.